



Southern & Eastern Regional Programme 2014-20

Annual Implementation Report 2020

Citizens' Summary

The Southern & Eastern (S&E) Regional Programme 2014-20 is a €620.1 million funding package from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funding which supports activities in the S&E region of Ireland. The Programme co-finances activities under five priority areas to improve quality of life and contribute to Ireland's Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, focusing on specific growth opportunities and sectors identified in Ireland's smart specialisation strategy, to support the creation of new quality jobs, boost innovation, increase licenses granted, and help to grow the local economies in the region. Beneficiaries include public sector, academic and private sector organisations across the S&E region.



The Southern Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority for the overall Programme and the co-financed activities under each priority are implemented through specific schemes.

The ERDF co-funds activities aimed at strengthening economic and social cohesion across the EU by correcting imbalances between its regions.

2020 in Focus

The Programme is progressing well and is either achieving or exceeding its targets. During 2020, the Programme was significantly revised to respond to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the S&E region.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Strengthening RTDI | 4 world class research centres supported | 653 new researchers in supported research centres | 870 industry partners engaging with research centres | 97 commercialisation fund awards |
| SME Competitiveness | 55,358 enterprises receiving financial/non-financial supports | 1,024 employment increase in supported enterprises | 54,459 number of participants on enterprise training programmes | |
| Low Carbon Economy | 12,214 households with improved energy consumption classification | | 10,796 tCO²eq estimated annual decrease in GHG | |
| Sustainable Urban Development | 9 integrated growth centre strategies implemented | | 1,652,174 people living in areas with integrated urban development strategies | |
| Coronavirus Response | 111,346,031 Items of PPE Purchased | | €77,920,823 Value of PPE Purchased | |

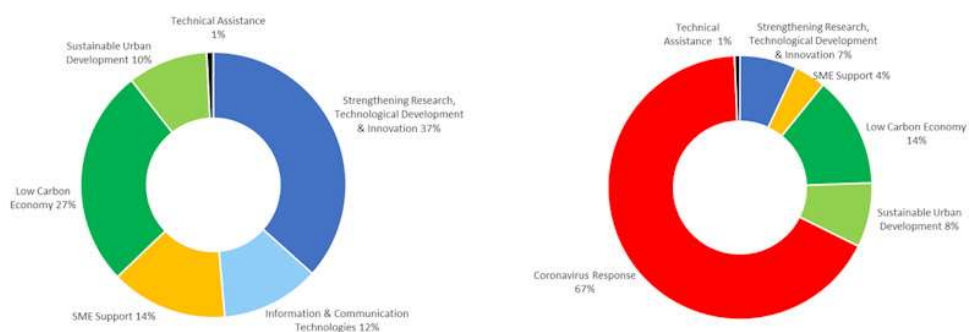
| | | |
|--|--|---|
| €310.06 million Total Programme Funding - ERDF | €290.9 million Total Expenditure Selected - ERDF | €158.7 million Total Eligible Costs Declared - ERDF |
|--|--|---|

Programme Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2020, the European Commission launched the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII), and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which allowed flexibility for EU Cohesion Policy to respond to the rapidly emerging needs in the most exposed sectors to help citizens in the most affected regions.

Under these measures, the S&E Programme underwent two revisions to reallocate undeclared funding, first, from existing priorities¹, and second, from the European Social Fund, to facilitate the creation of a new priority called Coronavirus Response. The revisions were adopted by the Commission in October and December respectively. The new priority has one scheme, the Health Support Scheme, which aims to maintain continuity of access to supplies of essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the health service in the S&E region.

Revision of S&E Regional Programme Budget 2020



CASE STUDY: Sustainable Urban Development Dodder Valley Greenway, Dublin

Despite delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, work began on the Dodder Greenway project to link Dublin City Centre to the Dublin Mountains, traversing through Ballsbridge, Milltown, Rathfarnham, Firhouse and Tallaght.

The project represents a major new transport and recreational facility for the entire Dublin region, catering for both commuter and social cyclists.

The route takes specific account of the rich ecology of the area and is a combination of off-road and on-road cycleways that will utilise existing facilities within the Dodder Valley and connect with the linear parkland along the route.



Co-financed by the ERDF S&E Regional Programme, South Dublin County Council and the National Transport Authority, the project is building three new pedestrian and cycle bridges, 750m of new path and 2.6km of upgraded paths along the Dodder Greenway.

¹ Reprogramming saw a reallocation of undeclared funds of €121.9 m ERDF from the RTD&I, ICT Infrastructure, SME Supports and Low Carbon Economy priorities, and €60 m ERDF from the European Social Fund.

Programme Priorities



The Strengthening Research, Technology, Development & Innovation priority is delivered through four schemes:

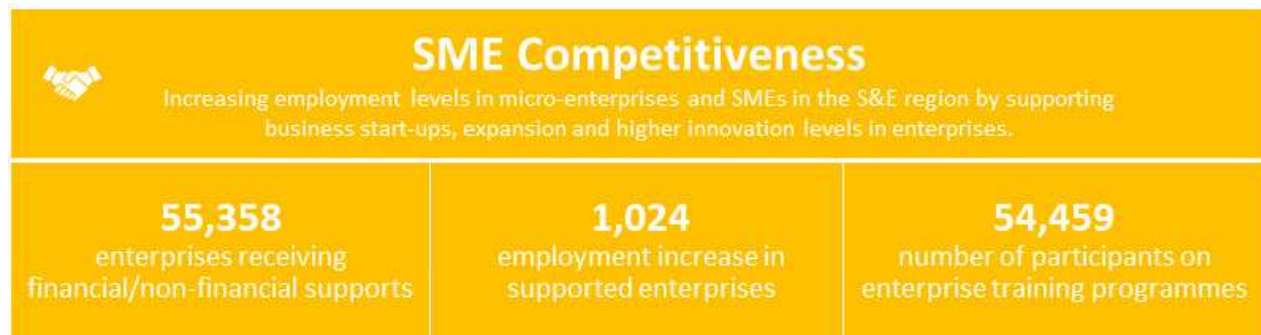
| | |
|--|--|
| <p>SFI Research Centres Scheme IB: Science Foundation Ireland</p> <p>Supporting the development of world-leading, large-scale research centres that facilitate collaboration between research and industry to develop new technology for commercialisation, attract international research capital, and increase researchers employed in industry.</p> | <p>Spokes Programme IB: Science Foundation Ireland</p> <p>Promoting further development of SFI Research Centres to incorporate new research areas, industry and academic collaborators aligned to the Research Prioritise Exercise for Ireland.</p> |
| <p>Commercialisation Fund IB: Enterprise Ireland</p> <p>Supporting science and engineering researchers in third level institutions and research organisations in applied research projects that generate outputs to benefit the Irish economy.</p> | <p>Innovation Partnership Programme IB: Enterprise Ireland</p> <p>Encouraging Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes for mutually beneficial cooperation and access expertise & resources to develop new/improved products, processes, services, and generate new knowledge/expertise.</p> |

CASE STUDY: Research, Technology, Development & Innovation ***Lero Research Centre***

Lero, the SFI Research Centre for Software, brings together expert software teams from Irish Third Level institutions to engage with industry, state agencies, education, and international collaborators to deliver on its twin goals of research excellence and social and economic relevance.

As the world’s second largest software exporter, Ireland is recognised internationally as a leading location for companies in the software sector and Lero is a key pillar of that with research spanning domains from driverless cars to artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, fintech, govtech, smart communities, agtech and healthtech. Lero has a proven capacity to attract and retain global research leaders and to make a substantial contribution both to software-related research and to the Irish economy. An economic impact assessment of Lero found that, every €1 invested in the centre (including EU funding) between 2005-2018 has contributed an average €5.25 to the Irish economy.





The SME Competitiveness priority is delivered through one scheme:

Micro-enterprise Support Scheme

IB: Enterprise Ireland

Delivered by 18 Local Enterprise Offices in the S&E region

Increasing the rates of business start-up and expansion, and enhance management capability, competitiveness, innovation, technological adaptation, and the export-orientation of micro-enterprises with supports such as the provision of business information, advisory services, capacity building, mentoring and financial supports.

CASE STUDY: SME Competitiveness

Intosport, County Kilkenny

Established in 1991 by husband and wife team Seamus and Mary Dowling, Intosport filled a marketplace void at the time by manufacturing and designing sports and leisurewear and before long the Castlecomer based business had established a client base ranging from schools, colleges and GAA clubs which far exceeded the boundaries of County Kilkenny.



Now more than 20 years on, Intosport has become synonymous with a wide-ranging catalogue of made to measure sports wear and accessories with special design requests a special feature of their service and have become an official supplier of GAA sportswear and merchandise.

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny supported Intosport in its early years with an Employment and Capital grant and recently with a Business Expansion Grant. Intosport also availed of non-financial supports such as business advice and specialised mentoring Intosport have grown from strength to strength and the couple have handed the business onto the next generation of their family. Intosport has also embraced the changing nature of consumer purchasing habits and now boasts an online shop and guarantee shipping within three days of ordering, which, given the size of the Irish diaspora, has ensured that the business has can explore markets beyond Kilkenny.



Low Carbon Economy

Contributing to Ireland's commitment in relation to its Europe 2020 carbon reduction targets by improving energy efficiency in the housing stock in the S&E region.

12,214

households with improved energy consumption classification

10,796 tCO²eq

estimated annual decrease in GHG

The Low Carbon Economy priority is delivered through one scheme:

Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme

IB: Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
Delivered by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

Improving the energy efficiency of the household at risk of poverty, reduce the amount of expenditure required for energy, and to improve health and well-being by reducing the amount of disposable income spent on energy. Households can avail of the expansion of the wall insulation measures to include internal and external wall insulation as standard (rather than just cavity wall insulation). This deeper retrofit approach is more expensive but yields greater energy efficiency improvements per household.



Coronavirus Response

Maintaining access to supplies of essential Personal Protective Equipment for the health services in the S&E region affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

111,346,031

Items of PPE Purchased

€77,920,823

Value of PPE Purchased

The Coronavirus Reponse priority is delivered through one scheme:

Health Support Scheme

Scheme Beneficiary: Health Service Executive

Maintaining access to supplies of essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the health services in the S&E region. Since March 2020, the global pandemic has caused unprecedented demand for PPE, triggering severe disruption to global supply chains. This presented the Irish health authorities with an extraordinary challenge to traditional PPE supply chains. The Health Support Scheme supports the cost of supplying the Irish healthcare system with essential PPE as part of a targeted, State-led investment that aims to facilitate the critical work of minimising the impact of the global pandemic in the S&E region and to safeguard the health and welfare of its people.





Sustainable Urban Development

Revitalising & regenerating urban environments in designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies & low carbon strategies for sustainable, multi-modal mobility & mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.

9

integrated growth centre strategies implemented

1,652,174

people living in areas with integrated urban development strategies

The Sustainable Urban Development priority is delivered through one scheme:

Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme

IB: Southern Regional Assembly

Supporting local authority strategies in the S&E region to tackle social, economic, environmental, climate and demographic challenges affecting urban centres.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdowns during 2020 which halted construction has had a detrimental effect on the work programme of the majority of ongoing sustainable urban development projects.

By the end of 2020, four projects are complete – the Apple Market in Waterford City, the Mary Elmes Bridge in Cork City, Shannon Town Park in County Clare, and Crescent Quay in Wexford Town.

Progress on the remaining ten projects was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which halted construction works at various points in the past year. However, progress is ongoing.

| Gateway/ Hub | ERDF Award | Project |
|------------------|------------|--|
| Waterford | €4m | Public Realm works, incl. Apple Market |
| Cork | €5m | Mary Elmes Bridge |
| | | Marina Park |
| Dublin | €7m | Swords Castle, Cultural & Civic |
| | | Dodder Valley Greenway |
| | | Dun Laoghaire Baths |
| Limerick-Shannon | €4.5m | Liffey Street Area Public Realm works |
| | | Limerick - Patrick Street |
| Wexford | €1m | Shannon Town Park |
| | | Crescent Quay Redevelopment |
| Ennis | €1m | Ennis Library |
| Mallow | €1m | Mallow Bridge Pedestrian Extension |
| Tralee | €1.5m | Island of Geese |
| Kilkenny | €1m | Redevelopment of Abbey Quarter |

CASE STUDY: Sustainable Urban Development Mallow Bridge Boardwalk Extension, Co. Cork

Construction works to install a boardwalk to Mallow Bridge has recommenced after the lockdown period due to COVID-19. The ERDF co-funded project with Cork County Council will create a shared space for cyclists, pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users along the side of the existing bridge and facilitate better traffic flow across the bridge for motor transport.

The steel boardwalk will be put in place by the end of the year and is designed to minimise the visual impact on the historic bridge, a protected structure dating back to 1712.



While creating a significant share space for multi-modal transport, it will also reinforce the link between the town centre and the residential area of Mallow to the south.

Programme Management 2020



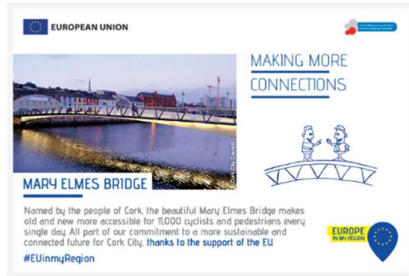
Supporting the Managing Authority's management and control of activities.

The Managing Authority (MA), works in partnership with the Intermediate Bodies, the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, and the European Commission on programme implementation. We support beneficiaries on compliance with the EU Regulations and national guidelines. In December 2020, we published a list of operations/ beneficiaries on our website following each certification of expenditure to the European Commission.

Highlights 2020



The ERDF and ESF MAs, the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform collaborated on a national consultation process to inform the selection of priorities for the use of EU cohesion funding in Ireland for the period 2021-27. Interested parties were invited to submit their views by way of response to the survey on a consultation website and had the opportunity to express their views at a webinar in July. The survey ran from 13th July until 4th September.



In September, we took part in the "Europe In My Region" initiative highlight unique initiatives that are the pride of a region and its inhabitants. The campaign was promoted via outdoor displays in the area, and on digital channels and social media. At the heart of the campaign was Cork's Mary Elmes Bridge, which helps create a more sustainable, less congested, and more connected City. The Mary Elmes Bridge was co-financed with €1.5m through the ERDF.



The MA collaborated with the European Youth Parliament in Ireland at their Cork weekend event in February 2020 before lockdown. A representative from the Vistamill Research Centre spoke at the plenary session to highlight the benefit of EU funding to research. The event facilitated sharing information on the ROP with over 100 young people from across Ireland & the EU

For more information on the S&E Regional Programme 2014-20:
www.southernassembly.ie/eu-programmes

Southern Regional Assembly,
Assembly House, O'Connell St., Waterford
T: +353 51 860 700 W: www.southernassembly.ie



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

#EUinmyregion